



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ELLINGTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES MARCH 1, 2016

MEMBERS

PRESENT: Chairman-Rebecca Quarno, Vice Chairman-David Bidwell, Sean Dwyer, James Gage, Robert Zielfelder, Jr.

ABSENT: George Nickerson, Alternate-Ann Harford and Alternate-Walter Moody

STAFF: Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Rebecca Quarno called the Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion – Energize Connecticut Initiative: Dave Bidwell – Lead

Lisa M. Houlihan, Town Planner, noted the Board of Selectmen (BOS) is unable to place the request to become the Energy Task Force on their agenda until the March 14, 2016 meeting due to budget season.

Commissioner Bidwell inquired about the Ellington Schools Solar Project.

Ms. Houlihan explained the project is in the approval process and pointed out because the solar panels will be roof mounted only the Middle School, Center Elementary School, and the Crystal Lake Elementary will be involved. Ms. Houlihan will keep the commission updated as it goes through approvals.

Discussion ensued.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

2. Discussion – Open Space Ongoing Education: Rebecca Quarno/Sean Dwyer - Leads
 - a. Open Space Brochure: Staff - Lead

Ms. Houlihan requested more time for staff to complete the open space brochure. The Commission agreed.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

3. Update – Hockanum River Trail Association: Ann Harford – Lead

Nothing to report.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

4. Report: Working Farmland Preservation Program: James Gage/Staff - Leads

Commissioner Gage referred to a discussion during our last meeting regarding Bahler Farms not qualifying for grant money, and that did not sound right to him. Mr. Gage contacted the National Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to discuss the situation and announced there was a grant for Bahler Farms from NRCS however, the Department of Agriculture (DOA) is not sharing it. Commissioner Gage briefly described how it got to this point and what the actual agreement was, noting the NRCS writes the grants and the money would be divided between town and state.

Commissioner Gage sent several emails to the DOA and has not heard back and feels as though he and Lisa will need to schedule a meeting with DOA to get some answers.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Houlihan informed the Commission the parcels on Jobs Hill Road have applied for Farmland Preservation. Lance Shannon, Department of Agriculture did visit the property with the owners and would like to keep 2 separate parcels allowing them to fall under the Community Farm Land Preservation. Ms. Houlihan distributed and reviewed the location of the properties on a map with the Commission.

Fred Spielman, owner of property on Middle Road that abuts East Windsor, 42 Acres have submitted an application for Farmland Preservation. Miss Houlihan will continue updating the Commission as information becomes available.

Ms. Houlihan presented a preliminary plan submitted by Bahler Farm for a 5 to 7 year project for a new 300,000 sq. ft. cow barn with a rotating milk station. Allowing for all the cows to be in 1 location with a 72 to 80 mechanical rotating parlor.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Houlihan announced the Planning Department is currently working on regulations for farm stores, announcing John Moser would like a farm stand on West Road, proposing sale of milk and dairy products.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Houlihan will continue to update the Commission as information becomes available.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

5. Report: Open Space Preservation Program

Nothing to report.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

a. Discussion – Progress of 16 Penfield Ave, APN 010-020-0000.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION AGREED TO REMOVE ITEM A. FROM FUTURE AGENDAS.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. FY 14-15 and FY15-16 Budget Expenditure Update – Town Staff.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

2. Approval of February 2, 2016, Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOVED (GAGE), SECONDED (BIDWELL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 2, 2016 MEETING MINUTES.

3. Correspondence:

a. The Habitat, winter 2016.

b. Spring 2016 Plant & Seedling Sale, North Central Conservation District.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION ADDED NORTHERN CONNECTICUT LAND TRUST ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015 AND A REQUEST FROM THE CONNECTICUT WATER COMPANY REGARDING A SPRING PLANTING PROJECT ON PUBLIC LAND WITHIN THE SHENIPSIT WATERSHED.

The Commission briefly discussed correspondence.

SO NOTED

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

**MOVED (BIDWELL), SECONDED (ZIELFELDER) AND PASSED
UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:15 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin Michaud / me".

Kristin Michaud
Recording Secretary